ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and an apparatus for user-based provisioning of distribution channels in a communications network allows an end user to select and initiate digital distribution channel allocation to accommodate their needs instead of submitting a service order to the telephone company each time a change in channel allocation is desired. In one implementation, a user-accessed provisioning terminal at a Distant Terminal (DT) receives a subscriber's distribution channel allocation selection after the user is authorized. The user's allocation selection is transmitted to a Remote terminal (RT) via a control channel, such as the Facility Data Line of an ESF-type T1 line or a dedicated data link that directly connects the DT and an RT. When the RT receives a provisioning message from a DT, the RT confirms that the provisioning selection is acceptable and automatically rearranges its time-slot interchange (TSI) connections according to the provisioning change initiated by the user. The RT sends an acknowledgement to the user-accessed provisioning terminal at the DT, which rearranges the TSI connections at the DT in accordance with the user's provisioning selection. If the RT cannot accommodate the user's provisioning selection, for example if there is insufficient feeder bandwidth to support the selected service, the RT notifies the user via the control channel and provisioning terminal so that the end user may select and initiate an alternative provisioning arrangement.